

TESTIMONY

By Martin Anderson

**Before the House Committee on Banking and
Financial Services
Subcommittee on Domestic and International
Monetary Policy**

***On H.R. 3591, a bill to award the Congressional
Gold Medal to Ronald and Nancy Reagan***

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Room 2128
Rayburn House Office Building**

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am honored to be here this afternoon to testify in favor of H.R. 3591, a bill that would award the Congressional Gold Medal to Ronald and Nancy Reagan.

I think I know Ronald and Nancy Reagan pretty well.

From 1975 to 1980 I was deeply involved in Ronald Reagan's presidential campaigns, heading up policy research and traveling with both Reagans on the campaign plane. After he was elected President in 1980 I served on the White House staff as his first economic and domestic policy adviser.

In 1988 I wrote a book about how he rose to power, called *REVOLUTION: The Reagan Legacy*. For 5 years I served as a trustee of the Reagan Presidential Foundation, which built the Reagan Presidential Library. And right now I am in the middle of writing a book for *The Free Press* on the extensive writings of Ronald Reagan before he was elected President.

Let's go forward a hundred years in time - to the year 2100. The political dust of the 20th century will be well settled by then. And when the historians of that time look back and write of the legacy left by Ronald Reagan they will conclude that he was one of the greatest of American presidents.

They will write of three things.

First and perhaps the least important of the three they will write of the economic marvel of the last 20 years of the 20th century, of the greatest economic expansion ever seen up to that time. They will write of how his comprehensive economic program - spending control, deep tax cuts, regulatory reform and a stable, predictable monetary policy -- ignited what economists today already call "the long boom."

They will note that his wise economic policies did not accomplish this alone. The dramatic computer revolution and the fading away of the threat of nuclear war contributed mightily. But his economic policies, which he fought for and won against tremendous opposition, were a necessary and vital part of the economic expansion which created tens of millions of new jobs and drove the Dow Jones stock market averages from 1000 to over 10,000.

The historians will also write of a second accomplishment, even more important than prosperity. They will write that Reagan won the Cold War with the former Soviet Union, and ended the threat of a global nuclear war that could have annihilated mankind. They will write that while he was President we began the slow and painful task of dismantling missiles tipped with nuclear bombs.

And then third, these historians will write of his most important accomplishment of all.

They will write that he led the final battle that defeated Marxism and killed the very idea of Communism. They will marvel at that victory.

They will write how evil communist dictatorships around the world toppled like dead, hollow trees in the high winds of freedom.

They will write of how hundreds of millions of men and women were freed, how the statist-socialist tide was turned – how liberty went on a roll.

Those historians a hundred years from now will write of a time of peace, a time of prosperity, a time of liberty – the ideas that civilized men and women pursued for centuries, and that then came within reach of more people than at any time before in the history of man.

They will call this the Reagan Revolution – not because Reagan somehow did it by himself, but because he was the political leader of the free world when it happened.

In fact, Ronald Reagan would be the first to insist that it was not his revolution – and that is one more reason why we honor him.

No, he would insist that those historic victories came from the efforts of tens of thousands of men and women – both Democrats and Republicans – who fought the tyranny of Communism – and who won.

Those revolutionaries were a varied lot. There were the intellectuals who fought with ideas. There were the brave fighters who fought with bullets. They were the courageous politicians who led the way.

Some of them are in this room today.

No, Ronald Reagan did not create the intellectual-political revolution that swept the world in the 1980s, a revolution that still rolls on as we begin the 21st century.

But Reagan was the political leader, its prime mover, the driving force.

And even he was surprised at how much had been accomplished in so short a time.

As he said in his farewell address to the nation on January 11, 1989 just before he headed back to his beloved ranch in the mountains of California:

“Once you begin a great movement,” he said, “there’s no telling where it’ll end.

"We meant to change a nation, and instead we changed a world."

And Ronald Reagan was not alone when he accomplished what he did. He had a special person with him every step of the way, a close partner, who not only helped make it all possible, but was essential to making it all happen.

That is Nancy Reagan. She was his trusted counselor, someone with superb judgment on policy and people, a rock of support, a loving wife.

She was by his side – on the plane and in the hotel rooms on the campaign trail and every single day in the White House and every single day now as the President slowly succumbs to the ravages of Alzheimer's disease.

They both earned the Congressional Gold Medal. They both deserve it.

But then there is something those historians 100 years from now probably won't write about, and maybe they won't even understand it. Oh, they will write of his policies and his accomplishments, the times he succeeded, the times he stumbled and fell – but I don't think they will understand his soul.

They won't write of his love of liberty, his sense of justice, his belief in God.

They won't write of his feelings of benevolence, of his respect and liking for his fellow men.

They won't write of his zest for fun and adventure, or of his keen and deep intelligence.

They won't write of his writings, of how he could craft a beautiful paragraph or a poem or even draw a picture.

And most of all the historians won't write of what made possible all that he did – his courage, his toughness, and his will to stay with his beliefs, to never waver, to never, never give up, no matter what the odds or what the defeat.

Those are the things that are the essence of Ronald Reagan.

They are the essence of all the great political leaders of this country – from the very first recipient of this medal, George Washington, on down to today.

For, as you know, without the courage to plunge in where ordinary men and women fear to go, to throw aside private careers, to forego fortune, to risk the slings of slander of self and family, to nakedly face the hot glare of public scrutiny – without that all the good ideas and good intentions go for naught. Without the toughness to fight the draining, daily battles of political warfare, nothing is accomplished.

As President Theodore Roosevelt said:

“The credit belongs to the man in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood.”

One of Ronald Reagan's favorite lines of poetry was by John Dryden, who wrote of a warrior who, wounded, only asked to:

“....lay me down for to bleed awhile, then I'll rise and fight with your again.”

That is the spirit that transcends Ronald Reagan. It is this spirit that is possessed by all the political warriors who fought the battles that led to the victory of capitalism over communism.

Today the man and the woman who embody that spirit more than anyone else in the world are Ronald and Nancy Reagan.